United Nations S/2018/703

Security Council

Distr.: General
13 July 2018

Original: English

Seventy-third year

Implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006)

Report of the Secretary-General

Reporting period from 1 March 2018 to 20 June 2018

I. Introduction

1. The present report provides a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) since my report on 8 March 2018 (S/2018/210), including on the specific provisions of Security Council resolution 2373 (2017). During the reporting period, there was no progress with regard to the outstanding obligations of the parties under resolution 1701 (2006) or towards a permanent ceasefire. The situation in the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) remained generally calm.

II. Implementation of resolution 1701 (2006)

A. Situation in the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

2. Despite the continued relative calm along the Blue Line and in the area of operations and the reaffirmed commitment by the Israeli and Lebanese authorities to resolution 1701 (2006), several developments heightened tensions. The UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander and my Acting Special Coordinator for Lebanon maintained permanent liaison with both parties to de-escalate tensions and continued to urge them to refrain from inflammatory rhetoric or any action threatening the cessation of hostilities and to utilize established channels to address concerns.

3. As in other parts of Lebanon, the UNIFIL area of operations was calm throughout the electoral period, including on Election Day on 6 May. The Lebanese Armed Forces and other security institutions increased their presence during the election period in the UNIFIL area of operations. At the request of UNIFIL, the Israel Defense Forces suspended construction works south of the Blue Line on 6 May. Celebratory shooting was heard in Tyre (Sector West) when preliminary election results were released.

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4. UNIFIL continued to monitor the construction works by the Israel Defense Forces south of the Blue Line, which started in January and led to tense situations on several occasions. On 8 April, as the works started east of the Blue Line close to the Kafr Kila Udaysah road (Sector East), a protester aimed what appeared to be a pistol towards UNIFIL. UNIFIL informed the Lebanese Armed Forces, which dispersed the protesters. On 12 April, in Kafr Kila, a sound from the backfire of a vehicle that was mistaken for a gunshot prompted the Israel Defense Forces to deploy to the location with rocket launchers, while the Lebanese Armed Forces took up positions with heavy machine guns. UNIFIL, through its liaison branch, de-escalated the situation.

5. UNIFIL observed in four separate instances weapons pointed by the Israel Defense Forces towards the north, including two incidents in which Israeli soldiers pointed their weapons towards Observer Group Lebanon and UNIFIL troops. On 31 March, UNIFIL observed Lebanese Armed Forces and Israel Defense Forces personnel pointing their weapons at each other near Udaysah. UNIFIL personnel intervened to defuse the situation.

6. On 10 May, the Israel Defense Forces alerted UNIFIL of potential spillover into the Shab'a area (Sector East) from kinetic activity on the Golan, outside the UNIFIL area of operations, and advised UNIFIL troops in the area to take protective measures. UNIFIL heard 41 explosions and observed 21 traces of rockets being fired south of Kfar Shuba (Sector East). Later that day, the Lebanese Armed Forces informed UNIFIL that they had found and removed debris from an air defence missile in Habbariyah close to Shab'a. UNIFIL increased its counter-rocket-launching operations in the area.

7. The Lebanese Armed Forces and other security institutions successfully maintained calm during peaceful public gatherings throughout Lebanon during Palestinian Land Day on 30 March, the inauguration of the United States Embassy in Jerusalem on 14 May, Nakbah Day on 15 May and al-Quds Day on 8 June, when more than 1,000 people gathered in Marun al-Ra's (Sector West). The situation in the UNIFIL area of operations remained calm.

8. In reference to the visit of an Iranian official to the UNIFIL area of operations on 28 January cited in my last report (S/2018/210), the Lebanese Minister of Defense, in a letter dated 13 April addressed to the President of the Security Council, stated that the Iranian official was accompanied by a member of the Lebanese Parliament, and that "his escort was not visibly carrying weapons".

9. From 1 March to 19 June, UNIFIL recorded 475 Blue Line ground violations, including 347 violations by shepherds, predominantly in the Shab'a Farms area, and by farmers cultivating their fields, mainly near Rumaysh, and 127 violations involving civilians and 1 violation by an unarmed Lebanese Armed Forces soldier accessing the Shu'ayb well near Blida (Sector East).

10. On six occasions, UNIFIL observed firing in the air by the Israel Defense Forces, apparently to deter civilians, mainly shepherds, from crossing the Blue Line, in the Shab'a area. On 2 May, the Israel Defense Forces fired two smoke grenades close to seven individuals crossing the Blue Line in Kafr Kila. The Israel Defense Forces apprehended a woman and a shepherd crossing south of the Blue Line on 28 March and 2 May, respectively. Both individuals were returned within 24 hours in the presence of UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces. UNIFIL is investigating the incidents. UNIFIL repeatedly urged the Israel Defense Forces to refrain from using live ammunition when firing warning shots and repeatedly urged the Lebanese Armed Forces to prevent Blue Line violations by civilians.

11. Israel continued to violate Lebanese airspace almost daily, in violation of resolution 1701 (2006) and Lebanese sovereignty. From 1 March to 19 June, UNIFIL

recorded 456 air violations, totalling 1,518 overflight hours. Unmanned aerial vehicles accounted for 368 (80.7 per cent) of these violations, with the remaining violations involving fighter jets or unidentified aircraft. UNIFIL protested all air violations to the Israel Defense Forces and urged their immediate cessation.

12. Early on 31 March, UNIFIL detected an unmanned aerial vehicle entering Lebanese airspace from south of the Blue Line. Two hours later, the Israel Defense Forces informed UNIFIL that an Israeli unmanned aerial vehicle was missing in the UNIFIL area of operations near Bayt Yahun (Sector West). As the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL arrived at the crash site, UNIFIL observed the remains of a tactical reconnaissance drone and four Mikholit missiles with Hebrew markings. An explosive ordnance disposal team of the Lebanese Armed Forces conducted a controlled demolition of the four missiles.

13. The Israeli occupation of northern Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line continued, in violation of resolution 1701 (2006) and Lebanese sovereignty. Israel has not responded to the UNIFIL proposal submitted to both parties in 2011, aimed at facilitating the withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces from the occupied area. The Lebanese Armed Forces informed UNIFIL in July 2011 of the agreement of Lebanon to the proposal.

14. The delineation of the maritime boundary between Israel and Lebanon remains disputed. Lebanon protested the alleged violations of its sovereignty by Israeli vessels operating near the Israeli line of buoys. Lebanon maintains that the line of buoys, installed unilaterally by Israel, runs through its territorial waters, and does not recognize it. The United Nations does not recognize the line of buoys. Lebanon also alleged that Israel continues to violate its sovereignty by conducting electronic monitoring, espionage and surveillance through infrastructure deployed south of and along the Blue Line and devices placed on Lebanese territory.

15. Pursuant to resolution 1701 (2006), UNIFIL continued to assist the Lebanese Armed Forces in establishing an area between the Blue Line and the Litani River free of unauthorized armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the Government of Lebanon and of UNIFIL. With an increasing focus on inspections, UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces operated 8 permanent checkpoints daily and a daily average of 4 temporary checkpoints and 10 counter-rocket-launching operations across the area of operations, with the Lebanese Armed Forces spot-checking vehicles. UNIFIL stands ready to act independently within the full scope of its mandate and capabilities should there be credible evidence or information supporting the presence of unauthorized weapons or the imminent threat of hostile activity emanating from the area of operations. UNIFIL continued to monitor locations where the Israel Defense Forces alleged the presence of unauthorized weapons and infrastructure in the UNIFIL area of operations, but has not observed any violations of resolution 1701 (2006).

16. In the course of its activities, UNIFIL observed 190 instances of individuals carrying unauthorized arms in violation of resolution 1701 (2006), 189 of which involved hunting weapons, mostly in the areas of Yarun (Sector West), Bastrah, Blida, Mays al-Jabal and Sarda (all Sector East), in the vicinity of the Blue Line. The other incident occurred on 9 May, when UNIFIL, patrolling in coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces, observed an individual in camouflage with an automatic rifle in a vehicle near Adshit al Qusayr (Sector East). UNIFIL alerted the Lebanese Armed Forces in all instances, including in a letter to the Commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces South Litani Sector, and requested that appropriate measures be taken (see para. 35 below).

17. Pursuant to paragraph 15 of resolution 2373 (2017), UNIFIL further increased its visible presence and activities, with a focus on preserving the cessation of

hostilities. In monitoring the cessation of hostilities, UNIFIL sustained its operational tempo as well as non-operational activities to mitigate risks in a timely manner, thereby preventing small incidents from escalating into larger-scale violence. The number of UNIFIL monthly operational activities has increased from 13,362 in August 2017 to 14,871 in May 2018, with a 68 per cent increase in foot patrols and a 28 per cent increase in the average flight hours of reconnaissance air patrols. More than a third of all activities were conducted at night.

18. From 1 March to 19 June, UNIFIL conducted 53,285 military operational activities, including 25,174 patrols. UNIFIL increased its static operational activities, with 120 permanent and temporary observation posts in May, up from 73 in February. UNIFIL continued its intensified foot patrols in urban areas where narrow roadways and community concerns do not allow for the use of heavy vehicles. UNIFIL increased the number of foot patrols along the Blue Line from 1,767 in January to 1,909 in May. UNIFIL's vehicular, foot and air patrols covered all municipalities and villages in the area of operations. UNIFIL maintained close contact with the Lebanese Armed Forces and community leaders in southern Lebanon in order to address any sensitivities without compromising mandated tasks.

19. The freedom of movement of UNIFIL was generally respected, except for those occasions detailed in annex I. In some cases, members of local communities opposed the use of heavy military vehicles on narrow roadways in populated areas.

20. During the month of May, three UNIFIL patrols and four patrols of Observer Group Lebanon were stopped by individuals wearing green uniform-like attire at the gates of a facility operated by the Lebanese non-governmental organization "Green Without Borders" in the vicinity of Aytarun (Sector West) near the Blue Line. The men claimed that UNIFIL and Observer Group Lebanon could only enter if accompanied by the Lebanese Armed Forces. The Head of Mission and Force Commander of UNIFIL informed the Commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces, General Joseph Aoun, that it was imperative for UNIFIL, including Observer Group Lebanon, to independently access and patrol all areas within its area of operations without hindrance. Following a joint visit on 19 June, the UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander and the South Litani Sector Commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces agreed to resume patrols in close coordination along the road.

21. Among the seven identified "Green Without Borders" locations in the area of operations, all close to the Blue Line, UNIFIL and Observer Group Lebanon are able to visit the second site in Aytarun almost daily. The sites in Ayta al-Sha'b and Marwahin and the two sites in Labbunah, all in Sector West, as well as the site in Udaysah in Sector East, are purportedly located on private property. UNIFIL is following up with the Lebanese Armed Forces regarding access to these areas. Meanwhile, UNIFIL conducts vehicular patrols along the surrounding roads and regular air reconnaissance of these areas.

22. Further enhancing the use of air assets, UNIFIL conducted on average 54.2 day and night reconnaissance flight hours per month, a 27 per cent increase compared to the last reporting period. Air reconnaissance patrols were concentrated over areas with limited access by UNIFIL ground patrols, such as private property, rugged terrain or terrain contaminated by explosive remnants of war or anti-personnel mines. Relations between UNIFIL and the local population remained largely positive. UNIFIL implemented quick-impact projects to address the pressing needs of local communities, to support the extension of State authority in the South and to contribute to force acceptance in line with the priorities identified during the strategic review of UNIFIL (see S/2017/202). A full update regarding the implementation of the recommendations of the 2017 strategic review is provided in annex II.

23. UNIFIL conducted 7,271 activities in coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces, including permanent and temporary checkpoints and counter-rocket-launching operations. UNIFIL conducted a daily average of 66 activities, in close coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces (19 per cent of all activities). Coordinated activities focused, in particular, on stepping up the number of foot patrols along the Blue Line, which increased from 15 in February to 236 in March.

24. The UNIFIL Maritime Task Force carried out maritime interdiction operations on a 24-hour basis and capacity-building for the Lebanese Armed Forces-Navy. From 1 March to 19 June, the Maritime Task Force hailed 2,535 vessels, 643 of which were inspected and cleared by the Lebanese authorities. The Lebanese Navy maintains a current maritime picture of its waters through its eight coastal radar stations. UNIFIL conducted 198 training sessions to improve common operational standards for surveillance and hailing activities. This also included training for the participation of a Lebanese naval vessel in maritime operations for an uninterrupted period of 48 hours alongside UNIFIL vessels. In addition, the UNIFIL Maritime Task Force continues to play an important stabilizing role in controlling Lebanese territorial waters.

B. Security and liaison arrangements

25. UNIFIL hosted two regular tripartite meetings, on 22 March and 28 May, during which liaison, coordination and the violations of resolution 1701 (2006) were discussed. The liaison and coordination arrangements established with the parties enabled UNIFIL to de-escalate tensions over Israel Defense Forces construction works south of the Blue Line and ensure that no construction activity was carried out in locations that Lebanon considers "reservation" areas. UNIFIL also hosted six dedicated tripartite meetings on Blue Line issues, during which both parties expressed their commitment to finding practical solutions to contentious areas along the Blue Line.

26. In addition to the increased engagement in the tripartite meetings, the Head of Mission and Force Commander of UNIFIL continued to liaise with the parties bilaterally to facilitate mutually acceptable solutions to contentious areas along the Blue Line, emphasizing that the visible marking of the Blue Line remains an important confidence-building activity. My Acting Special Coordinator reinforced these messages in her engagements with both sides.

27. The establishment of a UNIFIL liaison office in Tel Aviv, Israel, continued to be discussed with Israeli authorities. Their agreement to the UNIFIL proposal remains pending since 2008.

28. UNIFIL continued to train its personnel to ensure preparedness to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence. UNIFIL organized on 17 April a joint exercise on emergency team deployment at Naqoura (Sector West), with the participation of 21 Lebanese civil defence officers from South Lebanon. On 19 April, UNIFIL met representatives of the Lebanese Armed Forces, local municipal authorities and Lebanese civil defence governmental and non-governmental organizations to explore collaboration on civil defence and the protection of civilians, including through joint exercises with the Lebanese Armed Forces.

29. In accordance with the Security Council women, peace and security agenda and the policy on gender-responsive United Nations peacekeeping operations, UNIFIL continued to train military and civilian personnel on gender mainstreaming and conflict-related sexual violence.

C. Disarming armed groups

30. No progress was achieved with respect to the disarmament of armed groups. The maintenance of arms outside the control of the State by Hizbullah and other groups continues to restrict the ability of the Government of Lebanon to exercise full sovereignty and authority over its territory. Hizbullah continued to acknowledge publicly that it maintains a military capacity. On 26 March, Hizbullah Member of Parliament Nawaf Moussawi said that the "resistance" was "capable of striking deep into Israeli territory". On 21 April, Hizbullah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah warned that "the resistance now has the strength and capability and men and technology and expertise and experience and missiles that can strike any target in the enemy entity". On 15 May, he further warned that "a new phase" in the Syria conflict was opening and that "Israel proper could be the next target for retaliation".

31. On 1 April, Israel Defense Forces Chief of General Staff Gadi Eisenkot reportedly stated that the chances for war in 2018 were bigger than before, adding that, if war broke out, "everything under Hizbullah's use in Lebanon will be destroyed, from Beirut to the last point in the south". On 16 April, the Minister of Defense of Israel, Avigdor Lieberman, reportedly said that the threat facing Israel's northern border now included the Lebanese Armed Forces. On 7 May, the Minister of Education of Israel, Naftali Bennett, said the Lebanese election results reaffirmed that "Lebanon equals Hizbullah" and that Israel would "view Lebanon as responsible for any action from within its territory".

32. The Lebanese Armed Forces and security forces continued counter-terrorism operations and arrests of individuals suspected of affiliation with or support for extremist groups. From 1 March to 20 June, 40 terrorism-related arrests were reported, including of suspected affiliates of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Jabhat Fath al-Sham (formerly Nusrah Front), in particular elements accused of involvement in the 2014 assaults on the Lebanese Army in Arsal and Tripoli.

33. On 20 March, armed men blocked a road in Baalbek to protest raids conducted by the Lebanese Armed Forces in the area. On 24 April, an alleged Hizbullah member reportedly died in the explosion of a rocket-propelled grenade in Sidon. On 15 May, two members of the Internal Security Forces were shot as they attempted to remove illegal structures in Baalbek; similar incidents were reported in Beirut's southern suburbs on 30 May. On 22 May, one Lebanese soldier was killed and eight injured in armed clashes in Tripoli. Several personal disputes escalated into shooting. On 17 June, two persons were killed and five injured in a family dispute in Baalbek. In the context of the parliamentary elections, there were several incidents involving gunfire; one person was killed on 6 May and one on 8 May.

34. On 15 March, as a first step towards the creation of a National Committee for Firearms, Prime Minister Hariri established a Human Security Unit under the Presidency of the Council of Ministers to raise awareness of the risks of firearms.

35. On 9 May, the Lebanese Armed Forces declared that individuals violating the nationwide ban on hunting from January to mid-September would be prosecuted. The Army noted that, as obligated under resolution 1701 (2006), it would take additional measures to ensure that the UNIFIL area of operations was free of weapons, including hunting weapons.

36. The security situation in Palestine refugee camps in Lebanon remained generally stable, with violent incidents and shootings most prevalent in the Ein El Helweh camp near Sidon. Four people were killed and 11 injured during clashes in March and April involving extremist groups and the Joint Palestinian Forces. In one

incident, armed elements entered two United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) schools. On 7 March, clashes between Fatah al-Intifada and the Sa'iqa, both pro-Syrian Government Palestinian groups, in the Shatila camp in southern Beirut resulted in one fatality and several injuries. On 9 March, the Lebanese Armed Forces arrested a high-ranking Fatah Movement officer suspected of selling arms to extremist groups inside Palestine refugee camps in Lebanon. On 17 March, unknown assailants killed a member of the Joint Palestinian Forces in the Mieh Mieh camp near Sidon, causing the temporary closure of UNRWA schools and shops. On 10 June, the installation by the Lebanese Armed Forces of metal detectors at the entrances of the Ein El Helweh camp triggered peaceful protests by residents; the metal detectors were subsequently removed on 25 June.

37. There was no progress in dismantling the military bases maintained by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command and Fatah al-Intifada, which continue to compromise Lebanon's sovereignty and impede the ability of the State to monitor and effectively control parts of the border.

D. Arms embargo and border control

38. Several alleged violations of Lebanese airspace were registered by the Lebanese Government. In identical letters addressed to the Security Council and myself dated 6 April (A/72/831-S/2018/336), the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations conveyed her Government's message that "on 31 March 2018, Israel violated Lebanese airspace, using an unmanned aerial vehicle armed with four missiles. It followed that by sending a second aerial vehicle to bomb the first aerial vehicle after it had crashed on the outskirts of the town of Bayt Yahun in the Bint Jubayl district." In identical letters addressed to the Security Council and myself dated 10 April (A/72/832-S/2018/342), the Permanent Representative of Lebanon conveyed her Government's message that "on 9 April 2018, four Israeli warplanes violated Lebanese airspace... to conduct raids in the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic," warning that "the repeated violation of its airspace by Israel to conduct raids in the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic poses a particular threat." On 9 May, the Lebanese Armed Forces stated that debris from several missiles had landed in southern and eastern Lebanon following an escalation in the Syrian Arab Republic.

39. In a letter addressed to the Security Council and myself on 29 May, the Permanent Representative of Lebanon conveyed her Government's message that, "on 22 May 2018, an Israeli warplane violated Lebanese airspace and circled over the city of Beirut." The letter further states that the "Israeli Government flaunted that violation by displaying photographs of the combat aircraft on 22 May 2018 at a conference of air force commanders held in Israel."

40. In identical letters addressed to the Security Council and myself dated 12 April (S/2018/345) and 7 June, the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations stated that "Lebanese violations of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) are daily occurrences." On 13 April, the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations conveyed a response from the Minister of National Defence rejecting allegations contained in the letter from Israel of 5 February (S/2018/91). On 11 May, the Permanent Representative of Israel addressed a letter to me that informed of "the strengthening of ties between two internationally recognized terrorist organizations, Hamas and Hezbollah" and that "Hamas has been building its own military force covertly in Lebanon."

41. Allegations of arms transfers to Hizbullah continued and are of serious concern. While taking such allegations seriously, the United Nations is not in a position to substantiate them independently.

42. Reports of Hizbullah's engagement in the fighting in the Syrian Arab Republic continued. On 6 June, Speaker Nabih Berri said that Hizbullah would only withdraw once "Syria is liberated and its territories are united". On 8 June, Hizbullah Secretary-General Nasrallah acknowledged that Hizbullah was "present in Syria where we should be present and where the Syrian leadership asked us to be present". A number of Lebanese nationals also allegedly continued to fight with non-State armed groups in the Syrian Arab Republic.

43. The Lebanese Armed Forces continued to deploy land border regiments and construct watchtowers along the border with the Syrian Arab Republic. On 29 May, the Central Training Centre for border security was inaugurated at Rayak Air Base, Biqa', with European Union funding.

44. Cross-border fire from the Syrian Arab Republic into Lebanon has decreased. Lebanese authorities arrested several smugglers for transporting Syrians illegally into Lebanon, as well as Syrians accused of entering Lebanon illegally.

45. On 5 and 23 April, the Lebanese Armed Forces arrested 15 Syrian nationals suspected of terrorist group affiliation and seized weapons and ammunition during a raid on an informal Syrian refugee settlement in Arsal. On 14 May, in Al-Hirmil, Lebanese General Security arrested two Syrian nationals over affiliation with terrorist groups. On 17 May, the Internal Security Forces arrested an alleged arms dealer in Akkar, north Lebanon.

E. Landmines and cluster bombs

46. In mine-related incidents, two persons were killed and one injured outside Arsal on 6 March, a Syrian boy was injured outside Baalbek on 11 March and three people were killed outside Arsal on 12 April. One landmine explosion incident was recorded on 27 April in the UNIFIL area of operations in the vicinity of Yarun.

47. The Lebanese Armed Forces continued mine clearance operations along the eastern border. In the UNIFIL area of operations, six UNIFIL mine clearance teams cleared 5,436.5 m^2 of land and destroyed 581 anti-personnel mines and two unexploded ordnances. The United Nations Mine Action Service conducted 57 quality assurance monitoring visits and provided eight awareness briefings on landmines/explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices to 174 United Nations personnel. One mine risk education session was held in collaboration with the Lebanon Mine Action Center, an active partner in demining activities, benefiting 35 children. Some 150 United Nations personnel and over 600 school children attended two events organised by UNMAS on the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action on 4 April.

F. Delineation of borders

48. No progress was made towards the delineation or demarcation of the border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. The Syrian Arab Republic and Israel have yet to respond to the provisional definition of the Shab'a Farms area proposed in my report of 30 October 2007 on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2007/641). In Shab'a town on 13 April, Prime Minister Hariri asserted that "recovering the Shab'a Farms and the hills of Kfar Shuba is the responsibility of the State".

49. The dispute between Lebanon and Israel over their exclusive economic zones remained unresolved. On 21 March, Hizbullah Secretary-General Nasrallah stated that Hizbullah would continue "to protect Lebanon's land, maritime territories". On

19 April, Speaker Berri underlined that "all political forces are united [against] any violation of Lebanon's rights — especially on the oil and gas issue.

50. On 29 May, caretaker Minister of Energy and Water Cesar Abi Khalil approved plans to explore maritime blocks four and nine. Part of block nine is situated in the area disputed by Lebanon and Israel. Khalil also announced that preparations for a second licensing round would proceed.

G. Political and institutional stability

51. On 6 May, Lebanon held its first parliamentary elections since 2009. At the end of the registration period on 27 March, 77 lists comprising a total of 597 candidates were registered to compete in 26 districts for 128 parliamentary seats. Of the 597 candidates, 86 (14.4 per cent) were women, up from 12 in 2009. The overall voter turnout for the elections was 49.2 per cent, down from 53.37 per cent in 2009.

52. Lebanon conducted its inaugural out-of-country voting on 27 and 29 April across 39 locations. Of the approximately 82,000 expatriates registered to vote, the turnout was reported as 59 per cent.

53. Official results allocate seats as follows: Future Movement, 21; Free Patriotic Movement, 20; Amal, 17; Lebanese Forces, 15; Hizbullah, 12; Progressive Socialist Party, 8; the "Determination (Azem)" movement of former Prime Minister Mikati, 4; Marada, the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, Kataeb and Tashnaq, 3 seats each. For the first time, a candidate representing civil society won one seat through the electoral list, "Koulouna Watani", in Beirut. The number of elected women in parliament increased from four to six.

54. As of 20 June, five candidates have brought challenges through the established electoral dispute resolution mechanism.

55. In my statement dated 8 May, I congratulated Lebanon on the holding of parliamentary elections. I noted that "the elections represent a vital step in strengthening Lebanon's State institutions and consolidating its democratic tradition" and that I was looking forward to the formation of the new Government. In a statement on 10 May, the International Support Group for Lebanon congratulated "the Lebanese people and authorities for the completion of parliamentary elections on 6 May ... in a generally calm and peaceful climate", encouraged "the swift formation of a new Government" and looked forward to "working with the new Government as it follows up on its international commitments, including under resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006)" and to "the resumption of a Lebanese-led dialogue towards a national defence strategy in the post-elections period".

56. At its first session, on 23 May, the new Parliament re-elected Nabih Berri as Speaker and elected Elie Ferzli as Deputy Speaker. In his acceptance speech, Speaker Berri underscored that Parliament would act as "a shield on our sovereign land, maritime and airspace borders in defending and in retaliating, using the power of the state, the people, the army and the resistance against Israeli aggressions and her constant violations of our borders, airspace, and regional waters". Berri emphasized that Parliament would work on "completing the implementation of resolution 1701, as well as the 13 border points on which the continuous Israeli presence poses a threat to the demarcation formula" and would address corruption and reform.

57. On 24 May, President Michel Aoun nominated Saad Hariri as Prime Minister-designate and tasked him with forming a new Cabinet. In a statement that day, Saad Hariri committed to working on the formation of a national unity Government as soon as possible. He stressed the importance of a Government that would further political

stability, strengthen state institutions and reinforce the economy. Consultations on the formation of the next Government continue.

58. On 14 June, President Aoun chaired a meeting with the International Support Group for Lebanon led by my Acting Special Coordinator. The Group submitted a joint aide-mémoire, laying out principles for consideration in the new Government's ministerial statement and programme of work. The Group welcomed the President's vision for an inclusive Government of national unity that could carry forward the agendas of resolution 1701 and recent international conferences in support of Lebanon.

59. Prior to the expiry of the mandate of the outgoing Government, on 21 May the Cabinet appointed all 10 members of Lebanon's National Human Rights Institution, which had been pending since its establishment by Parliament in 2016.

60. On 15 March in Rome, under the auspices of the International Support Group, I co-chaired with Prime Minister Gentiloni of Italy a ministerial-level meeting (the Rome II conference) to endorse the respective strategic plans of, and bolster international support for, the Lebanese Armed Forces and Internal Security Forces. Lebanon renewed its commitments regarding the extension of State authority and the implementation of Security Council resolutions 1701 (2006) and 2373 (2017).

61. In his opening remarks, Prime Minister Hariri underscored the need to build State security institutions as "the sole defenders of Lebanon's sovereignty". He reiterated the Government of Lebanon's commitments to the policy of disassociation in order to shield Lebanon from regional conflicts and to accelerate deployments to south of the Litani, in line with resolution 2373 (2017).

62. The Government of Lebanon, the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL promoted the deployment of a Lebanese Armed Forces model regiment, increased maritime assets for the Lebanese Armed Forces and the establishment of a Lebanese Armed Forces regional civil-military cooperation centre in the UNIFIL area of operations.

63. In a joint statement, the 41 meeting participants endorsed the Lebanese Government's vision of the Lebanese Armed Forces as the sole defender of the Lebanese state and protector of its borders. Noting ongoing efforts to fully implement resolution 2373 (2017), participants called on the Government of Lebanon to accelerate effective and durable deployments to the South. Participants also pledged financial and materiel assistance in line with the updated capability development plan of the Lebanese Armed Forces and the strategic plan of the Internal Security Forces.

64. Participants also welcomed the statement of President Aoun on 12 March, in which he announced that the National Defence Strategy would be discussed by Lebanese leaders following the parliamentary elections and the formation of a new Government. On 8 May, President Aoun publicly reiterated his intention to call for the parties to convene to discuss the implementation of the Taif Accords and a national defence strategy.

65. Following the Rome II conference, UNIFIL, in close coordination with my Acting Special Coordinator for Lebanon and potential donors, engaged with the Lebanese Armed Forces to develop a funding proposal for the deployment of the model regiment, including the establishment of an operational training centre, a headquarters and accommodation for the regiment. On 18 May, the Lebanese Armed Forces inaugurated its regional civil-military cooperation centre in Marjayoun.

66. The national strategy for the prevention of violent extremism, closely aligned with the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (see General Assembly resolution 70/254), was endorsed by the Council of Ministers on

27 March. An interministerial taskforce has been established to oversee implementation. The Government of Lebanon has developed an 18-month pilot project focused on building confidence among youth.

67. On 15 March, I participated in an extraordinary ministerial conference in Rome co-chaired by Egypt, Jordan and Sweden in support of UNRWA. Subsequent contributions have almost halved UNRWA's overall budget shortfall of $446 million. However, core services remain vulnerable, with no funding available to start the 2018-2019 school year.

68. On 29 March, Parliament approved the 2018 State budget, which cut all ministry budgets by 20 per cent, resulting in a slightly reduced deficit of $4.8 billion.

69. On 6 April, France hosted the Conference Economique pour le Développement et les Réformes Economiques (CEDRE), in support of the Lebanese economy. In line with the $16 billion capital investment plan, which lays out infrastructure priorities, the Government of Lebanon outlined sectoral and structural reforms necessary to maximize investments by international partners and the private sector. Approximately $10.2 billion in loans were pledged, including $9.9 billion in concessional terms, and $860 million in grants were announced. The CEDRE communiqué called for the establishment of a strong, transparent follow-up mechanism for the tracking of project implementation.

70. As of 31 May, 986,012 Syrian refugees were registered with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). New registrations of Syrian refugees by UNHCR remain suspended by the Government since 2015. A decrease in the number of registered Syrian refugees was due mainly to deaths, onward movements, resettlement and a small number of spontaneous returns to the Syrian Arab Republic.

71. Localized returns of Syrian refugees continued. On 18 April, nearly 500 Syrian refugees returned from Shab'a, South Lebanon to Bayt Jinn, Syrian Arab Republic, in a movement initiated by the Reconciliation Committee in Bayt Jinn and facilitated by the Lebanese and Syrian authorities. While UNHCR was not involved in organizing these returns, it counselled returning refugees on civil documentation and other critical issues for their re-establishment in the Syrian Arab Republic.

72. As of 31 March, overall available humanitarian resources for Lebanon in 2018 amounted to $1.016 billion, including $269 million disbursed by donors and $375 million committed funding for 2018, in addition to funds carried over from 2017. Reported figures show a lack of visibility regarding multi-year commitments beyond 2018, restricting longer-term approaches and planning beyond essential services, with $247 million reported as commitments for Lebanon beyond 2018.

73. The Lebanon Crisis Response Plan was 21 per cent funded as of 31 March, with $560 million, including $308 million carried over from 2017. This low funding impacted service delivery, especially in water and health sectors, to refugees and host communities.

74. From 24 to 25 April, the European Union and the United Nations jointly organized the "Brussels II" conference on the theme "Supporting the future of Syria and the region", which aimed to renew and strengthen the financial commitment of the international community to support the Syrian people, neighbouring countries, and communities most affected by the conflict. The Lebanon Partnership Paper, agreed between the Government of Lebanon and the international community, included commitments from the Government of Lebanon in support of the protection of refugees and vulnerable Lebanese communities, education, health and a conducive operating environment for international non-governmental organizations.

75. During May and June, caretaker Foreign Minister Bassil stated that UNHCR was "discouraging refugees from returning to Syria". On 11 June, UNHCR received official notification from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants to "change its approach", ordering a freeze on the issuance and renewals of residence permits for international UNHCR staff in Lebanon. UNHCR replied on 18 June. By a note verbale dated 22 June, my Deputy Special Coordinator requested the Government of Lebanon to continue to facilitate the work of all members of the United Nations country team in Lebanon, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the 1946 Convention.

III. Security and safety of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

76. UNIFIL continually reviewed its security plans and risk mitigation measures, particularly following security threat warnings, in close coordination with Lebanese authorities. Security exercises were conducted to test the readiness of civilian personnel and their eligible dependants in case of evacuation during a crisis. In the Arqoub area (Sector East), strict security measures have remained in place, including the use of armed escorts, for movements by United Nations personnel. The alleged presence of extremist elements in Ein El Helweh Palestinian Refugee Camp, situated in Sidon along the main supply route connecting the UNIFIL area of operations with Beirut, continues to pose a security concern, potentially affecting UNIFIL movements through Sidon. Lebanese security institutions maintain a strong presence in areas surrounding the camp.

77. On 4 March, clashes involving the Ansar Allah movement in the Rashidieh camp near Tyre (Sector West) resulted in two fatalities, five injuries, material damage and the closure of UNRWA facilities for a day. UNIFIL staff were advised to avoid the area.

78. Following the theft of 2,240 rounds of small arms ammunition from the United Nations position near Haris (Sector West) on 29 December 2017, following which all but 26 rounds were recovered, a UNIFIL Board of Inquiry submitted its report to United Nations Headquarters in April. Following inspections of all UNIFIL units to ensure that all measures were in place for the safety of staff and premises, as well as for the secure storage of weapons and ammunitions, security measures have been stepped up, including on deterrence, patrolling, monitoring, and access and departure control. The Lebanese investigating judge concluded his investigation, indicting nine persons, including seven minors, on 12 February. The case was transferred to the Permanent Military Court for judgment; a hearing is scheduled for 5 October.

79. UNIFIL continued to monitor ongoing proceedings in Lebanese military courts against individuals suspected of planning or perpetrating serious attacks against UNIFIL. The Permanent Military Court held hearings on 10 April regarding the attack against UNIFIL peacekeepers serving with the Spanish contingent in 2007 and in the case of terror intent opened in January 2014. The next hearings for both cases are scheduled for 17 December. In the case of attempted serious attack against UNIFIL in 2008, in which one of the four sentenced perpetrators filed an appeal, the next hearing is scheduled for 21 June. Three investigations launched into the serious attacks perpetrated against UNIFIL on 27 May, 26 July and 9 December 2011 continue, pursuant to additional judicial instructions issued by the investigating judge. In the case of the homicide committed in 1980, when two UNIFIL peacekeepers from Ireland were shot dead and one injured, the Permanent Military Court deferred the issuance date of the decision, respectively, from 27 March to 24 April then to 26 June.

IV. Deployment of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

80. As of 19 June, UNIFIL comprised 10,480 military personnel, including 500 women, from 41 troop-contributing countries; 239 international staff, including 78 women; and 583 national civilian staff, including 153 women. The UNIFIL Maritime Task Force comprised four corvettes, two frigates, one helicopter and 764 of the Force's total military personnel, including 31 women. In addition, 58 military observers, including 5 women, from the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, serve with Observer Group Lebanon, under the operational control of UNIFIL. In total, women accounted for 5 per cent of military personnel, 28 per cent of civilian personnel and just over 6 per cent of all UNIFIL personnel.

V. Conduct and discipline

81. During the reporting period, neither UNIFIL nor the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon (UNSCOL) received allegations of sexual exploitation or abuse. Both entities continued to implement and further enhance measures to prevent sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. The United Nations country team's prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse network in Lebanon, along with the sexual and gender-based violence working group, which includes international and national non-governmental organizations, continued to inform local communities of expected standards of conduct for United Nations personnel and how to report misconduct. UNIFIL and UNSCOL continued to promote a productive, harmonious and inclusive working environment, with special emphasis on protection against sexual harassment and other forms of prohibited conduct.

VI. Observations

82. Adherence by all sides to resolution 1701 (2006) remains essential for the stability of Lebanon and the region. I remain concerned over the lack of full implementation of the resolution and the unfulfilled obligations of Lebanon and Israel. Non-compliance increases the risk of tensions and possible escalation into hostilities. I call upon both parties to redouble their efforts towards the full adherence to resolution 1701 (2006) to sustain and consolidate the decade of calm that has prevailed.

83. The 6 May elections were key for the renewal of the Parliament's democratic mandate and a milestone for continued institutional reactivation. I congratulate the Lebanese people on the conduct of the elections and encourage them to remain engaged in the democratic process. I encourage Lebanon's political leadership and all political parties to work in the spirit of national unity to speedily form an inclusive Government, reflective of the voters' will. Important responsibilities await the new Government as part of the ambitious agenda laid out by Lebanon and the international community at the international support conferences in Rome, Paris and Brussels. I call upon all political actors to adopt measures to increase women's meaningful participation and representation at all decision-making levels.

84. I welcome the continued relative calm along the Blue Line, although risks of miscalculation remain. The events on the Golan on 10 May are a stark reminder that the security and stability in the UNIFIL area of operations, as well as in Lebanon in general, remain affected by wider regional dynamics. The incident of 12 April, during which the Israel Defense Forces and Lebanese Armed Forces deployed and pointed weapons, is of concern and demonstrates the fragility of the situation along the Blue

Line and the importance of UNIFIL's liaison. I call on all stakeholders in Lebanon and Israel to exercise restraint at all times and work towards moving from the current cessation of hostilities to a permanent ceasefire.

85. I commend the parties for their constructive engagement within the UNIFIL liaison and coordination arrangements, including on efforts to prevent tensions around sensitive areas along the Blue Line. I welcome the restated commitment to resolution 1701 (2006) of both parties in bilateral engagements with the United Nations and at the tripartite forum. I encourage all to build upon this commitment. My Acting Special Coordinator for Lebanon will continue to deploy good offices and, with the UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander, will explore opportunities with the parties for confidence-building measures.

86. In addition, resolving the dispute over maritime oil and gas resources in the exclusive economic zones of Lebanon and Israel could offer mutual economic benefits. I encourage both parties to continue to explore entry points to that end, in support of which my Acting Special Coordinator will continue to offer my good offices.

87. I condemn the presence of unauthorized weapons outside state control. Together with threatening rhetoric, it heightens risks of miscalculation and escalation into conflict. Pursuant to resolution 1701 (2006), I call upon the Government of Lebanon to take all actions necessary to ensure the full implementation of the relevant provisions of the Taif Accords and of resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006), which require the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon so that there will be no weapons or authority in Lebanon other than those of the Lebanese State, in line with the Lebanese Cabinet decision of 27 July 2006.

88. I welcome President Aoun's statements on 12 March and 8 May, expressing his intention to convene a national dialogue towards a national defence strategy following elections and the formation of a Government. Such a strategy can only succeed if it is Lebanese-owned and Lebanese-led, comprehensive and sustainable, in recognition of the Lebanese Armed Forces as the only legitimate defender of Lebanon. Earlier decisions of the national dialogue should be implemented, specifically those relating to the disarmament of non-Lebanese groups and the dismantling of the military bases of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command and Fatah al-Intifada.

89. I remain concerned about the continued violations by Israeli aircraft of Lebanese airspace. They constitute a danger for the Lebanese population and fuel bellicose rhetoric and sentiments against Israel. In this regard, I note with concern the Israeli armed unmanned aerial vehicle which crashed in the UNIFIL area of operations on 31 March. The Israel Defense Forces also continue to occupy northern Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line in violation of resolution 1701 (2006). I reiterate my condemnation of all violations of Lebanese sovereignty and reiterate my call for Israel to cease its violations of Lebanese airspace and to withdraw its forces from northern Ghajar and the adjacent area north of the Blue Line.

90. I am concerned about Blue Line violations by Lebanese civilians, particularly in the Shab'a area, which led to several incidents with the Israel Defense Forces. I urge the Lebanese Armed Forces to address the issue of Blue Line ground violations by civilians.

91. The freedom of movement of UNIFIL in its entire area of operations and along the full length of the Blue Line is critical. I call on the Lebanese authorities to fulfil their responsibility to ensure unimpeded freedom of movement of UNIFIL.

92. As tensions have persisted in the region, Lebanon's policy of disassociation is more important than ever. I reiterate my call for Lebanon's adherence to the policy of

disassociation, consistent with the Baabda Declaration (2012), and for all Lebanese parties and nationals to cease their involvement in the Syrian conflict

93. I am encouraged by the steps the Government of Lebanon has taken to improve security along its eastern border as part of extending its authority throughout its territory. I continue, however, to condemn the movement of fighters and war materiel across the Lebanese-Syrian border in violation of resolution 1701 (2006). The lack of a delineated, demarcated Lebanese-Syrian border does not justify violations of Lebanese sovereignty by any party. I call upon all concerned to cease violations of the border and to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon.

94. I welcome the reaffirmation at the Rome II conference by the Government of Lebanon to its commitments under resolutions 1701 (2006) and 2373 (2017). I welcome the joint statement of the participants in the Rome II conference as a clear signal that international support for the Lebanese Armed Forces and State security institutions will continue.

95. Deepened cooperation between UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces remains essential in furthering the strategic dialogue and implementation of resolutions 1701 (2006) and 2373 (2017). I am encouraged by the steady progress of UNIFIL in implementing the strategic review recommendations and by progress regarding the model regiment. I encourage the Lebanese Armed Forces, with continued support from UNIFIL and the international community, to step up efforts in operationalizing the regiment. I welcome the inauguration of the Lebanese Armed Forces regional civil-military cooperation centre in the South. Such steps illustrate the Government's continued commitment to reinforcing the Lebanese Armed Forces and extending State authority south of the Litani River. I look forward to progress regarding the acquisition of an additional vessel for the Lebanese Armed Forces.

96. UNIFIL continues to take proactive steps to implement resolution 2373 (2017), including through the enhanced tempo, visibility and effectiveness of its operations and its support to the Lebanese authorities in establishing an area between the Litani River and the Blue Line free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the Government of Lebanon and UNIFIL. I welcome the measures taken by UNIFIL to increase the focus on inspections across the area of operations, including through permanent and temporary checkpoints and counter-rocket-launching operations, in coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces.

97. I welcome the activation of the National Human Rights Institution. I call upon Lebanon's next Government to ensure that this body is adequately resourced to carry out its mandate in an independent and impartial manner, in accordance with international human rights standards. The United Nations in Lebanon stands ready to provide its support.

98. Delivering upon the structural, sectoral and fiscal reforms agreed at CEDRE is instrumental to safeguarding Lebanon's stability. The capital investment plan and accompanying economic vision provides an unparalleled opportunity. I encourage Lebanon's political leadership to implement urgent reforms that combat corruption, enhance transparency and streamline expenditures, and to establish a follow-up mechanism to track progress and ensure mutual accountability.

99. I thank the Government of Lebanon as it continues to exercise generosity and hospitality in temporarily hosting Syrian refugees. Noting the importance of continued international assistance to refugees and host communities, I thank participants in the Brussels II conference for their generous pledges. As needs continue to outpace available resources, I appeal to donors to increase their flexible, predictable, timely and multi-year support to Lebanon.

100. I am concerned by the discourse concerning refugee returns. I call on all to work in a spirit of partnership in line with international standards, including the principle of non-refoulement, until conditions are met for a safe, dignified and voluntary return. I reiterate the importance of redoubling the efforts of international partners to create a hospitable protection environment in the Syrian Arab Republic.

101. I also remain concerned by the continued plight of the Palestine refugees. I thank Member States for their support at the 15 March extraordinary meeting in support of UNRWA. I note with concern, however, that a shortfall remains, imperilling critical services. Continued insecurity in the Palestine refugee camps is of serious concern and points to the potential risks to stability should UNRWA services and operations be interrupted.

102. I extend my appreciation to all countries contributing military personnel and equipment to UNIFIL and Observer Group Lebanon. I commend Acting Special Coordinator for Lebanon, Pernille Dahler Kardel, and the Head of Mission and Force Commander of UNIFIL, Major General Michael Beary, for their leadership, and I commend the civilian and military personnel of UNIFIL, as well as the staff of UNSCOL, for their continued efforts.

Annex I

Restrictions on the freedom of movement of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon from 1 March to 20 June 2018

1. On 6 March, about 30 individuals, using two vehicles, blocked a UNIFIL patrol in Jumayjimah (Sector West), accusing the patrol of having taken unauthorized pictures. Following the arrival of the Lebanese Armed Forces at the scene, the patrol was able to leave the area. UNIFIL has since patrolled the area without incident.

2. On 12 March, an Observer Group Lebanon patrol encountered a chain across a new tertiary road in Dayr Siryan (Sector East), where two individuals signalled the patrol to leave the area. One of them, claiming to be a government official, insisted that UNIFIL was not allowed to enter the area. The Lebanese Armed Forces informed UNIFIL that the location was private property. UNIFIL has increased its ground and air patrols in the area. UNIFIL has also used an alternative road to monitor the area and increased the number of counter-rocket-launching operations in the area. Observer Group Lebanon is also patrolling in Dayr Siryan, focusing on areas close to the Blue Line.

3. On 21 March, an individual in a vehicle stopped a UNIFIL patrol that was following-up on gunshots heard earlier on a secondary road in Hanin (Sector West) and asked the patrol to leave. Two other individuals on motorbikes arrived at the location, gesturing to UNIFIL to follow them back to the main road. As the UNIFIL vehicle had difficulties turning around, they hit it, causing minor damage. UNIFIL returned to the main road and resumed its patrol as planned. UNIFIL informed the Lebanese Armed Forces. Since the incident, UNIFIL has continued patrolling in Hanin without hindrance.

4. On 23 March, 10 individuals, including women, requested a UNIFIL patrol not to enter a road in Blida (Sector East) owing to the disturbance caused by the armoured vehicles. After bypassing the road, the patrol resumed its scheduled route. Subsequently, the mayor of Blida insisted that armoured vehicles could not enter the village owing to safety concerns. UNIFIL is following up with the authorities to find a solution. Since the incident, UNIFIL has continued patrolling in Blida using light vehicles only.

5. On 26 March, a UNIFIL patrol accompanied by the Lebanese Armed Forces was stopped on a narrow secondary road by several villagers in Jibal al-Butm (Sector West), after deviating, inadvertently, from the main road. The patrol left the area and continued its assignment. UNIFIL has since continued patrolling in Jibal al-Butm without incidents.

6. On 3 April, a UNIFIL patrol had to change its scheduled route after encountering a soil berm on a road south-west of Arab al-Wazzani (Sector East). The local authorities indicated to UNIFIL that the berm was placed by the land owner to prevent trespassing.

7. On 16 April, a UNIFIL patrol, in coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces, inadvertently entered a narrow road in Blida (Sector East). While attempting to exit the area, two men in civilian clothes blocked the UNIFIL patrol using a vehicle and a scooter. After the intervention by the Lebanese Armed Forces, the UNIFIL patrol was able to resume its activities.

8. On 19 April, seven individuals in civilian clothes blocked and surrounded an Observer Group Lebanon vehicle north of Hula (Sector East), using a vehicle and scooters. Before a second Observer Group Lebanon patrol and a quick reaction team dispatched by UNIFIL arrived at the scene, two intelligence personnel of the

Lebanese Armed Forces intervened, removed the civilians' vehicles and requested the Observer Group Lebanon patrol to leave the area. Observer Group Lebanon had conducted daily patrols to Hula in the past without any incidents. On 20 April, the mayor of Hula told UNIFIL that Observer Group Lebanon should be monitoring the Blue Line that is east of the village, but the patrol on 19 April was on the extreme western edge of the village. Observer Group Lebanon resumed patrolling the following day.

9. On 1, 2 and 3 May, individuals wearing uniform-like green attire stopped a UNIFIL foot patrol and four Observer Group Lebanon patrols at the gate of a facility of the non-governmental organization "Green Without Borders" along a secondary road in the vicinity of Aytarun (Sector West). The individuals informed the patrol that, in accordance with a decision by the Bint Jubayl municipality (Sector West), UNIFIL was not allowed to patrol the area. On 2 May, Bint Jubayl municipal authorities confirmed that the area had been designated as a natural reserve, with limited public access, to preserve the forest in that area, and that the gates were not meant to restrict the movement of UNIFIL. On 3 May, the Bint Jubayl union of municipalities informed UNIFIL that the Lebanese Armed Forces would provide UNIFIL with a detailed plan of "Green Without Borders" activities in Aytarun and propose an alternative route for UNIFIL to patrol the area. Patrols resumed, however, and on 11 May, two UNIFIL patrols, one in close coordination with Lebanese Armed Forces, were again stopped at the gate of the "Green Without Borders" facility. Both patrols completed their task using an alternative route. On 14 May, the Head of Mission and Force Commander of UNIFIL briefed the Commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces, General Joseph Aoun, about the series of incidents impairing UNIFIL's freedom of movement close to this facility. General Aoun assured him that the Lebanese Armed Forces Intelligence in Saida would address the issue and guarantee UNIFIL's full freedom of movement. Following multiple démarches by the Mission, on 19 June, UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander and the South Litani Sector Commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces jointly visited the area and agreed to resume patrols in close coordination along the road, resulting in one patrol in close coordination through the area. The Head of Mission and Force Commander raised the issue again with the South Litani Sector Commander on 25 June.

10. On 9 May, four individuals in civilian clothes and a local police officer stopped a UNIFIL foot patrol, conducted in coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces, in Yatar (Sector West). Following a discussion with the individuals, the Lebanese Armed Forces informed UNIFIL that they would not patrol this particular area. The patrol returned to the base without completing its task. Also on 10 May, the municipal police in Yatar (Sector West) argued that UNIFIL should coordinate its patrols with the municipal police. Patrols resumed in the area without further incidents.

Annex II

Update on the implementation of the recommendations of the 2017 strategic review of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

1. Further to the letter dated 8 March 2017 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2017/202) communicating the strategic priorities and key recommendations of the strategic review of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the present overview provides an update on the progress in the implementation of these recommendations.

Protection of civilians

2. UNIFIL continued its liaison with interlocutors from the Government of Lebanon on the protection of civilians and continued its close coordination with the Office of the Special Coordinator for Lebanon and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Lebanon.

3. As part of ensuring ongoing mission-wide preparedness, UNIFIL continued with the protection of civilians training. In April, UNIFIL organized a seminar with representatives of the civilian authorities and non-governmental organizations in charge of civil defence and the Lebanese Armed Forces to promote a better understanding of the UNIFIL mandate and the responsibilities of the Lebanese authorities regarding the protection of civilians. Participants explored ways to enhance the protection of civilians capabilities of the Lebanese Armed Forces and Lebanese authorities in the UNIFIL area of operations through future exercises and joint training to ensure preparedness.

Strategic dialogue mechanism

4. UNIFIL continued its consultations with the Government of Lebanon and the Lebanese Armed Forces on the deployment of the model regiment in the UNIFIL area of operations. The concept of operations for the model regiment was presented to potential donor countries at the Rome II conference held on 15 March. The Lebanese Armed Forces have appointed a commander and identified an area of responsibility for the model regiment within the UNIFIL area of operations. At present, the model regiment deployment process, which consists of eight phases, is in its second phase, which envisages the establishment of an operational training centre and the necessary accommodation infrastructure. UNIFIL continues to engage with the Lebanese Armed Forces and international partners to secure the required donor support.

5. With financial support from the Government of Spain and UNIFIL, the construction of the Lebanese Armed Forces regional civil-military cooperation centre was completed in Marjayoun. The centre was inaugurated on 18 May.

6. The Maritime Task Force continues to provide onshore and offshore training to the Lebanese Armed Forces-Navy. On 18 May, the Maritime Task Force certified the Lebanese patrol boat Tabarja and its crew to participate in maritime operations uninterrupted for 48 hours, in good weather conditions, alongside UNIFIL vessels. UNIFIL also conducted an internal study considering possible options for the deployment of an appropriate ship in Lebanese territorial waters.

Liaison and coordination with the parties

7. UNIFIL continues to advocate with the Israeli authorities for the establishment of a liaison office in Tel Aviv.

Structure of the uniformed and civilian components of UNIFIL

Land forces

8. In accordance with the recommendation of the strategic review, UNIFIL continued to enhance the coverage and effectiveness of coordinated operations between UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces, in the implementation of mandated tasks under Security Council resolution 1701 (2006).

Maritime Task Force

9. The recommended reconfiguration of the Maritime Task Force has been implemented since 1 January 2018 as indicated in the previous report (S/2018/210).

Community outreach activities

10. The Community Outreach Board continues to convene on a quarterly basis to coordinate mission-wide outreach activities.

11. Following the inauguration of the Lebanese Armed Forces regional civil-military cooperation centre in Marjayoun, UNIFIL has stepped up its engagement with the centre by identifying areas for joint activities and a coordinated approach to community support in the UNIFIL area of operations. Officials of the centre also participated in UNIFIL civil-military cooperation coordination meetings.

Liaison in Beirut

12. UNIFIL and UNSCOL continued to meet with representatives of the Government of Lebanon, the Security Council and troop-contributing countries, including in relation to the Lebanese Armed Forces model regiment initiative. UNIFIL continued to advocate for the strengthening of the Lebanese Armed Forces presence in the south and to liaise with relevant United Nations agencies at country team coordination meetings.